United Nations A/63/PV.92

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

92nd plenary meeting
Monday, 29 June 2009, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 20 (*continued*)

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Mr. Wolfe (Jamaica): I have the honour to make the following statement on behalf of the States members of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).

CARICOM Governments have noted with great concern the forcible removal from office of the democratically elected President of Honduras, His Excellency Manuel Zelaya, by certain sections of the military, and his forced exile.

We are also deeply concerned by reports that a number of Government officials and diplomatic representatives have been detained and may have been physically harmed.

Our Governments strongly condemn these actions, which are in breach of the principles of respect for the rule of law, human rights and constitutional order. CARICOM maintains its full support for and recognition of President Zelaya and therefore calls for his immediate reinstatement.

We deplore the violence and call upon the perpetrators to desist from these actions so that normalcy can be restored to the country for the benefit of the people of Honduras. In accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Inter-American Democratic Charter, we affirm our support for OAS in contributing to restoring normalcy to the country and for the use of the good offices of OAS Secretary-General.

Mr. Rosenthal (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. Guatemala would like to align itself with the statements delivered on behalf of the Rio Group, the Central American Integration System and the Non-Aligned Movement. We belong to all three groups. But we would like also to present our own national position.

We are meeting today under an agenda item entitled "The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development". In terms of that title, what happened in Honduras this past weekend was an anachronism, and a blow and an offence to all Central Americans. It was not in vain that, after a long period of military dictatorships, each with its own specificities, in four of our five countries — Costa Rica being the very honourable exception — and an equally long period of armed internal conflict in three of those countries, the Central American countries, with the assistance of the international community, embarked on the road leading to peace and democracy. All of us Central Americans had believed that the rule of law had been established, and that our armed forces had had their activities properly limited to the role played by the army in any democratic country.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

09-38616 (E)

Please recycle

The people and the Government of my country have therefore condemned in the strongest possible terms the use of force by the Honduran armed forces to resolve the differences between the various State powers. The constitution and the laws of Honduras include mechanisms to resolve this type of situation within the institutional framework and not by attacking it. It is also for this reason that my Government continues to recognize the constitutionally elected Government, led by President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, as the only authority of Honduras. We have reiterated this position in the framework of the Organization of American States, the Rio Group and the Central American Integration System.

I will not make a lengthy statement, given the short time at our disposal. But I did want to share with other delegations our outrage and concern regarding the events that have occurred in Honduras, our demand that President Zelaya be reinstated to the exercise of power and our hope that this constitutional crisis will be resolved within the framework of democratic institutions and the rule of law, for the good of Honduras and all of Central America.

Mr. Caraballo Núñez (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): First of all, I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting.

The Permanent Mission of the Dominican Republic to the United Nations would like to take this opportunity to reiterate the entirely unambiguous position of our Government, headed by Mr. Leonel Fernández Reyna, which is to reject and repudiate the coup d'état carried out in Honduras against the legitimate Government headed by Manuel Zelaya Rosales. In that connection, we align ourselves with the statements made on behalf of the Rio Group and of the Non-Aligned Movement.

For the Dominican Republic, this coup d'état represents a step backwards, because it is a violation of the democratic Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS). Thus, the Dominican Government demands full compliance with the call made by OAS for the restitution of the Government of President Zelaya, which is the legitimate democratic Government chosen by the Honduran people. We must support the endeavours of OAS, long recognized as the appropriate forum for the defence of democracy and legality in our region.

The Dominican Republic was the victim of a similar coup d'état, on 25 September 1963, against the legitimate democratic Government of President Juan Bosch. As in the case of President Zelaya, President Bosch was kidnapped and sent abroad. It is obvious that no national law can codify the use of such brutal measures. That period of repeated coups d'état brought some very difficult times to our region, with constant military hostilities and disregard for the will of the people.

This is why the Government of the Dominican Republic understands that this coup d'état must be rejected, lest in the future it have a contagious effect on other countries in the region and return us to an era of barbarism. This affects all of us, because for 30 years the entire region has been going through a process of transition and the consolidation of democracy, a process that was unfortunately interrupted yesterday in Honduras. This is a coup d'état against all the democratic progress we have achieved, and we therefore categorically reject it. President Zelaya must be returned, to carry out his functions as the legitimate President of the Republic of Honduras.

Mr. Almansoor (Bahrain) (*spoke in Arabic*): On behalf of the Group of Arab States, I convey to you, Mr. President, our thanks and appreciation for having convened the present series of plenary meetings.

I would like to make the following comments. We firmly believe that disputes between differing parties should be settled through peaceful means. There must be no recourse to violence to resolve such problems. On the basis of that principle, we call for the return of the legitimate Government led by Mr. José Manuel Zelaya, the legitimate President of Honduras. We call for the liberation of those detained and for guarantees of their lives and liberty. The sacred character of the constitution must be respected. It is necessary to turn to the people for a peaceful resolution of whatever problems there may be among the parties in Honduras.

Mrs. Viotti (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I congratulate you, Mr. President, on your initiative to convene this series of plenary meetings of the General Assembly to discuss the situation in Honduras. I would like to associate myself with the statements delivered by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and by the representative of Chile on behalf of the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Brazil has vehemently condemned the military action that resulted in the deposition of the President of Honduras, Mr. José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, and his departure from the country. My Government has also called for President Zelaya to be returned to his functions immediately and unconditionally.

Actions of this type constitute an attack against democracy and are not in keeping with the political development of the region. Constitutional questions must always be peacefully resolved within the existing institutional framework.

We are encouraged by the fact that this attack against the democratic constitutional order in Honduras has been unanimously condemned by the international community, in particular by the countries of the region and by regional cooperation organizations such as the Organization of American States (OAS), the Common Market of the South, UNASUR, the Rio Group and the Central American Integration System. It is particularly important that the Permanent Council of OAS, in a special meeting yesterday, vigorously rejected the coup d'état and demanded the immediate, secure and constitutional return of President Zelaya to his functions. The Permanent Council decision to convene a special session of the OAS General Assembly to take the necessary decisions pursuant to the Inter-American Democratic Charter to deal with the situation was also very timely and appropriate.

We support the efforts of OAS, which possesses all the political and legal instruments necessary to support democracy in Honduras and make an effective contribution to the return of the country to democratic normalcy. Brazil will continue to participate actively in those efforts.

Ms. Espinosa (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for the timely convening of this series of meetings. My delegation would like to align itself with the statements made on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Rio Group, Bolivarian Alternative for the Peoples of the Americas (ALBA) and Union of South American Nations (UNASUR).

Faithful to the norms of international law, the principles of the United Nations Charter, in particular the provisions of Articles 55 and 56, and the resolutions adopted by the General Assembly, Ecuador would like to reiterate its most vigorous rejection of the coup d'état committed against the legitimately constituted Government of President Manuel Zelaya and to express our solidarity with the people of Honduras.

We would also like to support the immediate response by the Organization of American States (OAS) and its decision to convene an emergency special session of the OAS General Assembly. We reaffirm our support for the 21 June declaration of the Permanent Council, through which that regional organization rejects and repudiates this unconstitutional attack against democratic order and demands the immediate, secure and unconditional return of President Manuel Zelaya Rosales to his constitutional functions as well as that of all of the officials in his Government.

In this regard, Ecuador, as a member of ALBA, would like to highlight the meeting of heads of State organized to lend its unreserved support to the democratic regime in Honduras. ALBA also unconditionally supports the legitimately constituted Government of President Zelaya and demands that the forces behind the coup d'état in Honduras put an end to this violation of the norms of democratic coexistence and the rule of international law.

I would like to reiterate that, as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ecuador, Fander Falconí, has stated, my country will not recognize any Government other than that of President Zelaya and demands that the right of peoples to be consulted be respected.

We also want to bring to the attention of the Assembly the statements made by President Rafael Correa, who called upon the people of Honduras to peacefully resist and protest against the de facto powers in that country. Ecuador is concerned about the attack against the constitutional order in the Republic of Honduras and reaffirms that the United Nations General Assembly must demand the immediate return of President Zelaya to the functions for which he was democratically elected and demand full respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of States.

Lastly, Ecuador supports your excellent initiative, Sir, to invite President Zelaya to personally address the General Assembly.

Mr. Benmehidi (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I wish to thank you, Sir, for having convened this meeting. My delegation associates itself with the

statement made by the Permanent Representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and wishes to make the following statement.

In line with the principles and commitments it has signed on to in the international arena, Algeria reaffirms its strong condemnation of governmental change by unconstitutional means, wherever it may occur throughout the world. This principled position is based on its attachment to the principles of the United Nations Charter. It was consecrated in the Constitutive Act of the African Union, in line with the Algiers Decision adopted at the 1999 summit of the Organization of African Unity, and confirmed in 2000 by the organization in the Lomé Declaration.

Algeria associates itself with the international movement condemning the arbitrary arrest of President Manuel Zelaya, which is aimed at cutting his mandate short, and calls for the unconditional re-establishment of constitutional order in Honduras. Algeria demands the reinstitution of the legitimate Government of Honduras, with the legitimate President Manuel Zelaya at its head. Algeria expresses its solidarity with the countries of Latin America in all their endeavours to establish constitutional justice in Honduras.

Ms. DiCarlo (United States of America): Yesterday, the United States joined our fellow members of the Organization of American States (OAS) in condemning the coup and the arbitrary detention and expulsion of President Zelaya and in calling for the full restoration of constitutional order. We further joined our OAS colleagues in demanding the safe and unconditional return of President Zelaya to Honduras so that he can resume his constitutional functions.

As stipulated in the resolution adopted by the OAS Permanent Council yesterday, we refuse to recognize any Government of Honduras other than the constitutionally legitimate Government of President Zelaya. President Obama yesterday called on all political and social actors in Honduras to respect democratic norms and the rule of law and to resolve any tensions and disputes peacefully, through dialogue and free of outside influence.

We will continue our work through OAS to determine how best to support the Honduran people as they seek to peacefully restore their constitutional Government, relying on the Inter-American Charter as the pillar for safeguarding democracy in the Western Hemisphere.

We call on the international community to support the efforts of OAS. We call on the international community to join together in solidarity with the Honduran people in demanding the peaceful restoration of democracy and constitutional order in Honduras, and we call on the international community to resist any outside interference in this process.

Mr. Solón-Romero (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, Bolivia aligns itself with the statements of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, the Non-Aligned Movement, the Rio Group and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR), of which we are members. All of those statements clearly and energetically condemn the coup d'état carried out in the sister Republic of Honduras. All reject the interruption of the rule of law in Honduras. All call for the immediate restitution of President José Manuel Zelaya as the sole legitimate and constitutional President of Honduras.

For my delegation, it is essential that the restoration process take place as soon as possible. Every day and every hour that pass exacerbate the violation of the rule of law in the sister Republic of Honduras. Bolivia and many other States that have spoken here will recognize no other Government than that of José Manuel Zelaya. The issue is of immense importance, because we have seen in the press how the perpetrators of the coup d'état seek to portray themselves as having carried out a constitutional succession. Nothing is further from the truth, because President Zelaya was expelled from the Republic of Honduras against his will and by force. We cannot accept or admit that what took place was a constitutional succession; it was a coup d'état, and the international community must demand that the officers who undertook the coup return to their barracks.

My country always favours dialogue, but the reinstallation of the legitimate President is paramount. We are deeply concerned about talk of an election process through a provisional Government, whereby the perpetrators of the coup are seeking to consolidate a coup government. Elections will certainly take place in Honduras, but under the presidency of President José Manuel Zelaya. Allowing any provisional Government to carry out an election would make us complicit in the violation of the rule of law in Honduras.

President Evo Morales was among the first to take a stand against the coup d'état in Honduras, and he did so, because just last year we, too, suffered a coup — a civilian coup d'état. Various opposition groups occupied institutions in different parts of the country. Our airports and public offices were occupied, and attempts were made to occupy the military barracks and police headquarters. It was the energetic support of the international community that cut short that attempted coup.

At the time, UNASUR stated clearly in the Moneda declaration that there must be dialogue in Bolivia, but only after the coup perpetrators withdrew from our institutions and the rule of law was re-established. There must be dialogue, but only after the coup perpetrators return to their barracks, and the only dialogue possible at this time is to convince them to do so.

We are concerned that the coup has claimed its first casualty in Honduras. The longer the situation lasts, the greater is the probability of further casualties. Only increased vigilance and determined action on the part of the international community can accelerate the abdication of the perpetrators of the coup.

Last year, when the Plurinational Republic of Bolivia suffered a similar situation perpetrated by reactionary civilian groups, the international community played a key role in maintaining the rule of law. But the other key and decisive factor, without a doubt, was the mobilization of the people and social movements of Bolivia.

In conclusion, the Government and people of Bolivia extend their warmest salutations to President Zelaya and the people of Honduras who have mobilized in the streets against this dictatorial violation.

Mr. Limeres (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important meeting. The delegation of Argentina wishes first of all to express its support for the statements made by the Permanent Representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and by the Permanent Representative of Chile on behalf of the Union of South American Nations.

Mr. Solón-Romero (Plurinational State of Bolivia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The Republic of Argentina vehemently condemns the coup d'état perpetrated against the legitimately elected Government in Honduras and calls for the unconditional and immediate restoration of President Zelaya to his office. We would also like to stress here the necessity for full respect for the human rights and basic freedoms of the people of Honduras, as well as for the lives and physical safety of all members of the legitimate Government of Honduras.

Mr. Montoya (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation supports the statements made by the representatives of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The events that took place over the weekend in brotherly Honduras are to be deplored both in regard to the situation in Central America and the efforts to make it a region characterized by peace, freedom, democracy and development, a noble goal underscored by item 20 of the agenda of the General Assembly, under which this meeting has been convened.

The Government of Colombia issued a statement yesterday on the events in Honduras. I would like to share with other Member States the deep consternation expressed by our Government over the rupture of the constitutional order in Honduras. My country condemns the acts of force that expelled the legitimately and democratically elected Government of President Manuel Zelaya Rosales, and calls for the full re-establishment of the legally constituted order in Honduras.

My delegation also wishes to express its support for the actions undertaken by the Organization of American States (OAS) with a view to finding democratic solutions to the situation. As has been stated in this meeting, yesterday the Permanent Council of OAS adopted resolution 953, in which it took a stand on this delicate issue. In that resolution, it was agreed to convene a special session of the General Assembly of OAS on Tuesday, 30 June to adopt the necessary measures. Colombia appreciates the role of that regional organization and will lend its support to the speedy adoption of its decisions.

Mr. Gonsalves (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): At the outset, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines aligns itself with the statements made on

behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Non-Aligned Movement and the States members of the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines categorically condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the coup d'état engineered by the armed forces of Honduras against the legitimately elected Government of José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, President of the Republic of Honduras. This action is illegal and wholly unwarranted, and represents a gross violation of the rule of law and the norms of civilized nations. We call for the immediate restoration of the constitutional order, including the restoration to power of President Zelaya and his Government, and for the full respect of democratic norms.

The leaders of the Honduran military have dishonoured themselves in this naked grab for power. In violently forcing President Zelaya into temporary exile, kidnapping sitting members of the Government and violating international law through the abduction, physical mistreatment and abuse of foreign diplomats, the architects of this shameful coup d'état have indeed heralded a return to barbarism, as stated by President Cristina Fernández of Argentina.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines joins those nations that have called unequivocally for the immediate return of President Zelaya to his legitimately elected post and duties. We do not recognize the purported new Government of Honduras, and urge other nations to similarly reject any Government other than the one freely chosen by the people of Honduras.

In our hemisphere, we have firmly turned the page on an ignominious chapter of anti-democratic military power grabs, unsupported by the vast majority of the people and encouraged solely by a selfish and short-sighted elite. We urge international solidarity in condemning this cowardly and anti-democratic action and in demanding the prompt return to office of President Zelaya and his Government. We all have an obligation to ensure that the popular will is respected through prompt restoration of the democratic order.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines expresses particular concern and outrage as a member of the Caribbean Community. One of our members, Belize, is a near neighbour of Honduras, and the current unrest therefore directly touches and concerns the central interests of our subregion. Similarly, as a signatory to the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas, we are doubly outraged at this brutal and criminal affront to democratic institutions, safety and stability of a brother State.

It is through the solidarity, unanimity and unequivocal condemnation of all subregional, regional and international multilateral institutions, including the Organization of American States and the United Nations, that this despicable aberration will be beaten back into the dustbin of obsolete and discredited extrajudicial tactics.

Saint Vincent and the Grenadines also salutes the bravery of the Honduran people, who have signalled their rejection of those illegal and barbaric acts by the military and its co-conspirators. We continue to urge a peaceful resolution to this conflict, and call for a non-violent restoration of the constitutional order. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines therefore reiterates its solidarity with President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, his Government and the noble people of Honduras.

Permit me, like my brother the Permanent Representative of Cuba, to quote José Martí, the apostle of Cuban independence, who said that "one just principle from the depths of a cave is more powerful than an army". Today we must reaffirm the just principles of human rights, democracy, non-violence and respect for the rule of law. With firm adherence to those just principles and with the unstinting support of the international community, the people of Honduras shall soon prove to be more powerful than the military dictators.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to express the gratitude of the delegation of El Salvador for the initiative to convene this meeting of the General Assembly to address the current worrisome emergency situation in the brotherly Republic of Honduras.

In that connection, the Government of El Salvador has, through its President, Mr. Carlos Mauricio Funes Cartagena, expressed its wholehearted rejection and vigorous condemnation of the breakdown of the constitutional order in the Republic of Honduras. We have also called for all of the national institutions of Honduras, as well as all international bodies, to contribute to the reinstitution of democratic governance in that country as soon as possible,

including the immediate restoration of constitutional President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales.

Moreover, my Government demands respect for and faithful compliance with the Inter-American Democratic Charter, which has been endorsed by all countries members of the Organization of American States. We also demand observance of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, in particular our common responsibility to resolve conflicts by peaceful means and in line with current international law in order to make a contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. At the same time, my country demands full respect for the human rights and physical and moral integrity of the Honduran people, including that of Honduran Government officials and members of the diplomatic community accredited to that brotherly country.

The Government of El Salvador associates itself with the position of the Rio Group. We also emphasize the validity of article 2 of the Framework Treaty on Democratic Security in Central America, according to which the Central American model is to be based, among other things, on the rule of law, the existence of security under the law, the effective exercise of civil liberties and the unequivocal and democratic principle of the subordination of armed forces, police and public security forces to constitutionally established civil authorities chosen in free and pluralist electoral processes.

We have also condemned the illegal detention of Government cabinet members, other officials of the Republic of Honduras and civil society leaders. We demand their immediate release and respect for their physical well-being. El Salvador does not recognize any person or group of persons who have illegitimately assumed the presidency of the Republic of Honduras by means of a coup against the constitutional order carried out by certain sectors of the Honduran population.

We would also like to express our support for the initiative of the President of the General Assembly to invite President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales to address the General Assembly as soon as possible.

Mr. Yáñez-Barnuevo (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain associates itself with the statement delivered by the representative of the Czech Republic on behalf of the European Union.

As Ambassador Reina Idiaquez, Permanent Representative of Honduras, himself said at the beginning of this debate, I too would like to point out that Spain was among the first countries to express its position following the news of the hostile action that took place yesterday in the brotherly Republic of Honduras. Also yesterday, Mr. José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, President of the Spanish Government, issued a communiqué, which I would now like to summarize.

The President of the Government of Spain expressed his most emphatic condemnation of the illegal detention and expulsion of José Manuel Zelaya Rosales, constitutional President of the Republic of Honduras. He demanded his immediate return to the office to which he had been democratically elected and reiterated his belief that dialogue and respect for democratic standards are the sole means for finding a resolution to any dispute.

The President of the Spanish Government also asserted the unacceptability of altering the constitutional order and democratic stability of Honduras by means of the events that have taken place. He emphasized that there could never be a solution to the Honduran crisis outside the country's constitutional framework.

The President of our Government also expressed his support for the Organization of American States and his hope that the mission to be deployed by that organization to Honduras would lead to a candid and respectful dialogue that observed the institutional roles of all of the political and social stakeholders in Honduras.

The communiqué concludes by expressing the Spanish Government's resolve to continue to cooperate with other countries of the Ibero-American region, the European Union and the international community to find a way out of the current crisis. We therefore reiterate Spain's full commitment to democracy, the rule of law and human rights throughout the world, and in particular in Latin America, with which we have ties of every sort. We would also like to express our solidarity with the people of Honduras, their legitimately elected President and their democratic system, which we hope will ultimately emerge strengthened from this difficult challenge.

Mr. Hernández-Milian (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to begin by associating my country with the statement delivered by the

Ambassador of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group. We also support the resolution adopted by the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States and the declaration of the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Central American Integration System.

Yesterday morning, once the plane transporting President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales landed at the airport in San José, Costa Rica, President Óscar Arias Sánchez immediately went to the air base to receive President Zelaya as a head of State, special guest and friend, given President Zelaya's close ties with our country.

The Government of Costa Rica has emphatically condemned the events taking place in our neighbouring sister country in Central America yesterday. We deplore the way in which President Zelaya was forced to leave his country. President Óscar Arias immediately called on all the countries of the continent to condemn the coup d'état in Honduras and stated:

> "We believed that the long night of dictatorships in Latin America was over. This is a lamentable step backwards for democracy in Honduras, Central America and Latin America. This breakdown of the constitutional order is unacceptable."

My Government regrets that some civilians, political leaders and sectors of the population in Honduras have welcomed the coup d'état merely because they do not agree with the positions of the Government in office. In this context, we support the energetic condemnation issued by the Council of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the Central American Integration System last night in Managua, demanding the immediate restoration of the President of Honduras. We reject, as stated by the ministers, the perversion of legal standards that is being used to justify this breakdown in the constitutional and democratic order in Honduras. Naturally, we also condemn the illegal arrests that have taken place.

For Costa Rica, it is essential that general elections be held in November 2009 as planned, which we expect will be carried out with an international presence and under the presidency of Manuel Zelaya. Costa Rica is firm in its demand that President Zelaya be reinstated, and we will not support any interim leadership between now and the elections. We call for respect for human rights by everyone in Honduras. We trust that subregional and regional institutions, with the support of this Organization, will be able to find the key to ensuring the immediate return to constitutional order in the sister Republic of Honduras.

Ms. Francis Lanuza (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to congratulate you the President of the General Assembly for convening this meeting to discuss this important issue.

The delegation of Panama would like to reiterate the statement it delivered this morning, during the Conference on the World Economic and Financial Crisis, on the situation in our sister Republic of Honduras, which is unacceptable to our Government. Panama also fully supports the statements of the representatives of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group and Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement. We reiterate our categorical rejection of the acts to destabilize democracy that took place yesterday in Honduras, whereby an illegitimate military action was carried out against the constitutional Government of President Manuel Zelaya.

President Martin Torrijos has expressed his most energetic condemnation of the coup d'état, during which the President of the Republic of Honduras was kidnapped and expelled from the country. The Latin American and Caribbean region has been enjoying an admirable democratization process, and our peoples engaged in perfecting and consolidating that democracy. This makes any attempt to take us back to the times of political conspiracy — or changes of Governments against the will of the people as legitimately expressed by lawful means — all the more unacceptable.

Panama expresses its solidarity with the Government of President Zelaya and calls on the international community to reject acts of destabilization in order to enable an immediate restoration of constitutional order in the Republic of Honduras, with the immediate reinstatement of President Zelaya to the full exercise of his functions.

We also support the efforts of regional and international institutions and agencies, such as the Organization of American States and the Central American Integration System secretariat, which have expressed their solidarity and taken a stand against this difficult situation, which endangers the progress achieved in consolidating democracy in Central America.

Finally, Panama demands respect for the integrity and dignity of the other people who have been arrested, kidnapped or disappeared in the course of this deplorable military action.

Mrs. Coye-Felson (Belize): Belize associates itself with the statements that have been delivered on behalf of the Caribbean Community, the Rio Group and the Non-Aligned Movement.

We take this opportunity, as a member of the Central American family, to express the full solidarity of the people and Government of Belize with our neighbours, the people and the constitutional Government of Honduras. In so doing, we proclaim the supremacy of the rule of law, constitutional order and democracy. We condemn absolutely the instrumentalities of force that have threatened these fundamental pillars of peace and security. We call for the return to constitutional order and the immediate reinstatement of President José Manuel Zelaya to his constitutional functions.

Belize lends its full support to all efforts in accordance with international law at the subregional and regional levels, through the Organization of American States, in order to ensure the full respect for the rule of law and democracy in Honduras.

Mr. Chávez (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): Peru welcomes the initiative of convening a meeting of the General Assembly to urgently address the situation in the sister Republic of Honduras. We welcome the fact that, as evidenced in the course of this debate, Honduras enjoys the greatest possible international solidarity and support.

We also want to welcome the invitation extended to President José Manuel Zelaya to address the Assembly as soon as possible. It is encouraging to see the way that Member States have expressed their vigorous condemnation of the interruption of the constitutional order in Honduras.

Consequently, on this occasion, we would like to share with the Assembly the position of the Peruvian Government, as expressed yesterday in the following terms:

> "The Government of Peru expresses its energetic condemnation of the breakdown of the constitutional order in Honduras that occurred today. Peru reiterates its call for the preservation of democratic institutions with full respect for the rule of law and the legal order in Honduras, and firmly supports the efforts currently being undertaken by the Organization of American States (OAS) to restore democracy to that sister nation, pursuant to the principles of the Charter of the OAS and the Inter-American Democratic Charter. Peru will closely follow developments in the situation and will remain in ongoing consultations with the other States of the region."

In accordance with this position, Peru associates itself with the statements made by the representative of Mexico on behalf of the Rio Group, the representative of Chile on behalf of Union of South American Nations, and the representative of Cuba on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement.

The international community must make a peaceful and effective contribution to the re-establishment of the constitutional order in Honduras. Peru believes that regional organizations have a primary role to play in this regard and have been fulfilling that duty in a commendable manner. The OAS has a long history of defending and promoting democracy in the region, and we believe that we must all support its current efforts.

Finally, allow me to make a clarification. This morning, the President of the Assembly referred to my country as among those that had adopted legislation to extend presidential terms. This indeed happened in 1993, but it was revoked in 2000. Therefore, in Peru, presidents may not be immediately re-elected. This does not mean that other countries cannot adopt whatever legislation on this subject they may consider appropriate, in strict compliance with their constitutional processes.

Mr. Cancela (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): On behalf of the Government of Uruguay, I associate myself with the statements made by the representatives of Mexico and Chile on behalf of the Rio Group and the Union of South American Nations, respectively.

Aware as I am of the recent events in the Republic of Honduras, I would like to express the support of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay for the democratic institutions in that sister nation of Latin America and emphatically condemn the kidnapping and expulsion of President José Manuel Zelaya, in open violation of the constitutional order. We also condemn all acts of violence, in particular the arbitrary arrests of Minister for Foreign Affairs Patricia Rodas

and the Ambassadors of Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela, in flagrant violation of international law and the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.

Our country will remain attentive to the decisions of the Permanent Council of the Organization of American States, which is meeting in special session to consider this crisis situation. Its actions have our full support.

It is with sorrow that we note the repetition of events that we believed were finally and forever buried in the past. Once again, sabre-rattling would silence the legitimate and sovereign voice of the people. We know through our own historical experience that sabre-rattling is followed by silence — the silence of freedoms denied, the silence of those who have been disappeared, the silence of death. No act of vanity, no messianic posturing, no one — absolutely no one — can be allowed to take precedence over the constitutional order that peoples have democratically attributed to themselves, in full freedom, to regulate their civic life.

A Honduran Government without democratic legitimacy and hostile to constitutional order will never find an interlocutor in Uruguay.

Mr. Lima (Cape Verde) (*spoke in French*): What is happening today in Honduras is repulsive to our democratic conscience and a serious warning to all democracies and to all those who fight throughout the world for the most fundamental right of nations to live freely in justice and peace without the interference of armed men. The African Union in its Charter and in its resolutions and declarations throughout the years has firmly condemned coups d'état and attacks against democracy and legitimately formed Governments.

Cape Verde firmly denounces all anti-constitutional attacks that undermine the rule of law and bring about a breakdown of its democratic foundations. Cape Verde associates itself with the many appeals, in particular those of countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, for a safe and secure return of President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales and the re-establishment of constitutional order in Honduras.

We support the efforts of the Organization of American States to help Honduras and to re-establish democracy in that country. We welcome the unified position of its members on the basis of these principles, and we hope their efforts will be crowned with success.

Indeed, we strongly believe that this is a coup not only against the President of Honduras, but against all people who aspire to live in peace and democracy. It is not only an anachronism in terms of history, but also an insult to the future of the world. On behalf of the right of the people of Honduras to live in peace and democracy, today it is not just a handful of countries that are demanding the restitution of law. The entire world, through the voice of the General Assembly, is saying "enough" to military rule and demanding that an end be put to all coups d'état in every country and in the international community.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

I salute the people of Honduras, I salute the people of the Americas and I salute President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales. As those who opposed the dictatorship sang following the death of President Salvador Allende in the Moneda Palace, they shall not pass.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this issue.

Tomorrow we will be honoured to have with us, at 11 a.m., President José Manuel Zelaya Rosales of Honduras. Immediately after that, we will proceed to take action on a draft resolution that is currently being prepared. Anyone wishing to do so may become a sponsor of that draft resolution.

The representative of Honduras has asked for the floor.

Mr. Reina Idiaquez (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would very briefly like to note that we are in the process of reaching consensus on a draft resolution that we will be ready to introduce later today or as soon as possible, so that it might reflect the opinions of all of those of us who have condemned the events in our country.

The President: I thank the representative of Honduras for that clarification.

Today is a sad day. Yesterday was a sad day and today continues to be sad, but there is also quite a bit that we should be happy about. Unity among all of us has been manifest — unity in the repudiation of what we have, in unison, to repudiate clearly and categorically if we are going to have a better world. This is a time that calls for clarity, not ambiguity in our speech.

In that sense, I was very glad to hear all of the statements made here. There were very few exceptions that were perhaps a bit ambiguous, perhaps one. On the other hand, I was very glad to hear our sister, the representative of the United States, saying something that I will attempt to quote as I recall it. She said something to the effect that the United States will only recognize the constitutional President, José Manuel Zelaya, and that it would not recognize any other who might come forward as a result of this coup d'état. We hope this coup d'état will come to an end very soon.

I think that that is, without a doubt, the feeling that we have expressed here. We do not recognize any other Government than the legitimate, constitutional Government of Honduras. We should also recall and utilize such unity whenever our respective democracies are threatened by similar efforts in other latitudes.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

The Assembly has thus concluded this stage of its consideration of agenda item 20.

The meeting rose at 4.25 p.m.